

Message Text

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71-62

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 181420Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1275

UNCLAS CARACAS 13158

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT VE

SUBJ: COPEI INTERNAL RIVALRIES ERUPT INTO VIOLENCE

REF: CARACAS 12826

1. THE COPEI PARTY SPLIT BETWEEN PARTISANS OF INCUMBENT SECRETARY GENERAL PEDRO PABLO AGUILAR (BACKED BY SENATOR LUIS HERRERA CAMPINS) AND JOSE CURIEL (SUPPORTED BY EX-PRESIDENT CALDERA), WHO ARE CONTENDING FOR THE PARTY'S SECRETARY GENERALSHIP (DESCRIBED REFTEL). HAS BEEN DRAMATICALLY HIGHLIGHTED BY A SHOOTING AFFRAY WHICH LEFT ONE MAN KILLED AND ANOTHER SERIOUSLY INJURED. THE MORNING OF DECEMBER 14 LUIS ALBERTO PEREZ AND FREDDY FRANCO, SUPPORTERS OF PEDRO PABLO AGUILAR, ENTERED A COPEI PARTY OFFICE IN VALENCIA TO RECEIVE PARTY PROPAGANDA MATERIAL. AN ARGUMENT ENSUED WITH THOSE INSIDE, ONE OF WHOM, JOSE ANGEL FLORES, A CHAUFFEUR TO DEPUTY LUIS CORONA AND A SUPPORTER OF CURIEL, SHOT PEREZ DEAD AND WOUNDED FRANCO WITH A PISTOL BELONGING TO CORONA. FLORES WAS ARRESTED AND TAKEN INTO CUSTODY BY POLICE.

3. THE SHOOTING TOOK PLACE JUST BEFORE INTERNAL COPEI PARTY ELECTIONS TO CHOOSE THE STATE DELEGATION FROM CARABOBO STATE TO THE COPEI NATIONAL CONVENTION IN EARLY 1976 WERE TO HAVE BEEN HELD. THE SHOOTING CAUSED THE INTERNAL ELECTION TO BE SUSPENDED, AND A BIG COPEI FUNERAL WAS HELD FOR THE SLAIN MAN

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ON DECEMBER 15. COPEI NATIONAL LEADERS ARE NOW DEBATING WHETHER

TO GO AHEAD WITH THE CARABOBO ELECTIONS, SUPPORTERS OF PEDRO PABLO AGUILAR ARGUING THAT THE COEPI NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMITTEE SHOULD INTERVENE AND NOT LEAVE MATTERS TO THE LOCAL COEPI ORGANIZATION, WHICH APPARENTLY IS LARGELY CONTROLLED BY PRO-CURIEL FORCES.

4. COMMENT. ACCION DEMOCRATICA IS QUIETLY REJOICING IN COEPI'S INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES, WHICH THIS INCIDENT IS SPOTLIGHTING, MUCH TO COEPI'S EMBARRASSMENT AND DISCOMFITURE.

SHLAUDEMAN

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NNN

Message Attributes

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